

the Federal Government has a responsibility to act.

I don't think there's any question that the fight against teenage drunk driving demands national action. Congress should make zero tolerance the law of the land. Drinking and driving don't mix for anyone. They certainly shouldn't be mixed by teenagers. The faster we act, the sooner the States will act and the more lives we'll save. Let's get to it.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:07 a.m. on June 9 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 10. In his remarks, the President referred to Capt. Scott O'Grady, USAF, who was rescued after being shot down and stranded in western Bosnia.

Remarks at the Dartmouth College Commencement Ceremony in Hanover, New Hampshire

June 11, 1995

Thank you very much. President Freedman, Acting President Wright, Governor Merrill, thank you for your warm welcome. To my distinguished fellow honorees—I was thinking when they were all introduced, all the others who won this distinction of your honorary degrees, that if my blessed mother were still alive, she would be saying, “See, Bill, they accomplished something; you're just a politician.” [Laughter] I am honored to be in their company, and I thank them all for the contribution they have made to the richness that is American life. To the board of trustees and especially to the parents and families and members of the class of 1995, let me begin on a very personal note. I always love coming to New Hampshire. I am delighted to be back at Dartmouth, but I am especially grateful to be here seeing my good friend President Jim Freedman looking so very well and back here at this graduation.

I also want to thank Dartmouth for something else, for contributing to my administration with the Secretary of Labor, Bob Reich, who came with me today. I understand that I have caused something of an inconvenience here—[laughter]—and that we are now breaking tradition here at Memorial Field, having left Baker Lawn. But I did a little historical inquiry and determined that when President Eisenhower came here in 1953, Baker Lawn replaced the Bema as the site of commencement. I am reliably informed, however, that the next time a President shows up, you will not have to move to the parking lot at the West Lebanon Shopping Center. [Laughter]

You know, when President Eisenhower came here, he said, “This is what a college is supposed to look like.” And I have to tell you, even in the rain it looks very, very good to me.

I want to thank you, too, for honoring the class of 1945. See them there? They did not have a proper commencement because they left right away to finish the work of World War II. One of the greatest privileges of my Presidency has been to express over the last year the profound gratitude of the American people for the generation that won World War II. A year ago this past Tuesday, I stood on the bluffs of Normandy to say to the brave people who won a foothold for freedom there, we are the children of your sacrifice. I say again to the class of 1945: The class of 1995, the generation of your grandchildren, and all of us in between are the children of your sacrifice, and we thank you.

To those of you in this class, the 50 years that have elapsed since they sat where you sit today have been a very eventful time for this old world. It has seen the ultimate victory of freedom and democracy in the cold war, the dominance of market economics and the development of a truly global economy, a revolution in information telecommunications and technology which has changed the way we live and work and opened up vast new possibilities for good and for evil.

The challenge of your time will be to face these new realities and to make some sense out of them in a way that is consistent with our historic values and the things that will make

your own lives richer. The challenge of your time, in short, will be to redeem the promise of this great country.

Now there are unparalleled opportunities for those of you with a wonderful education in this global economy and this information age. And you don't have to worry about things that your parents used to worry about all the time. I am very proud of the fact that in the last 2 years, for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there are no Russian missiles pointed at the people of the United States of America. And I might add, there are no American missiles pointed at the people of Russia.

From the Middle East to Northern Ireland, from South Africa to Haiti, where, as the citation said, my friend Bill Gray did such great work to restore democracy, we see ancient conflicts giving way to peace and freedom and democracy in a genuine spirit of reconciliation. Hundreds of millions of people now breathe the air of freedom who, less than a decade ago, found it a distant dream. Every country in Latin America but one is now a democracy.

I am proud that our Nation could support these developments. But as all of you know, this new world is not free of difficulty, for the forces of opportunity contained within them seeds of destruction. The heavy hand of communism and dictatorships have given way to bloody conflicts rooted in primitive religious, ethnic, and racial hatreds from Europe to Africa. The mobility of money and people and the advance of technology have strengthened the hand of organized crime and drug traffickers from Latin America to Asia to the former Soviet Union. And we have all been reminded recently that none of us in this open, free-flowing world of ours are immune from the forces of organized evil and terrorism.

The possibilities of more rapid economic development have posed new threats to the global environment. Rapid changes in the world economy have brought vast new opportunities, but they have also brought uncertainty, stagnant incomes, and indeed, rapid insecurities, even in the wealthiest countries in the world. And we have seen it in ours.

Here at home, though we have made progress on our deficit and expanding our trade and taking serious action against crime and trying to increase the ability of our country to educate our people and to welcome those from around the world, as so many of you have come to

find your educational opportunity here, we know that for the first time since this generation left in World War II, Americans are worried that their children will not have a better life than they enjoyed. Half of all of our people are working harder for less than they were making 15 years ago, because the global economy punishes people who don't have the skills to learn to compete and to win in a world that is changing daily, indeed, hourly.

In our Nation, for the first time since World War II, we have watched, over the last decade and more, the great American middle class which is the core of our idea of America begin to split apart along the fault line of education. And of course, we all know that our social fabric today in this country is being rent apart by what is happening to our children. More and more of them are subject to violence and abuse. A higher and higher percentage of them are born into poverty. More and more of them are having children while they're still children. Even though the overall crime rate in this country has gone down, random violence among children is still increasing. More and more children are spending more of their lives with one-parent families, sometimes trapped on welfare, but more often, far more often, being raised by utterly exhausted parents who are working two or more jobs to give their children a chance, just a chance, at a good life.

Because in the 1980's we were unable to resolve these problems, because inequality and insecurity increased, because the realities of today and tomorrow were not addressed, the American people have continued to lose faith in the ability of their Government and sometimes, even more importantly, in the ability of our society to solve these problems. And perhaps the most important difficulty we face is the increasing cynicism of our own people.

Today in Washington we're having a great debate about what to do about all this, and that's a very good thing. On the one side, we have people who say that most of these problems are personal and cultural, and if all of us would just straighten up and fly right we wouldn't have these problems anymore. And of course, at a certain level that is self-evidently true. None of you would have a diploma today if you hadn't done the right thing to earn it. And nothing can be done for anyone to get out of a tight life unless people are willing to do for themselves. But that ignores the other

side of the debate, which is that there are plain economic and social factors that are not even common to the United States, putting pressure on people and taking away their hopes and threatening their dreams.

We have a great debate about what the most important thing for our Government to do is. On the one side are those who say that the Government can't really do anything to solve our problems anyway, so the most important thing is to balance the budget as quickly as possible without regard to the consequences. On the other hand, there are those who say we have a budget deficit and we ought to do something about it, but we have an education deficit as well. And when we have so many poor children, we need to invest in people to make sure they can live up to their God-given potential and that that is also important.

Today what I want to say to you is, wherever you come down in all these great debates, the most important thing is that you should be a part of the debate because your life will be far more affected by what happens in the next 2 years than my life. I have been given the opportunity of the American dream. I was the first person in my family ever to graduate from college. When I was a young boy growing up in Arkansas, one of our honorees President Overholser's father was the Presbyterian minister in my hometown. He raised one daughter to be the president of Duke, the other daughter to be the editor of the Des Moines Register. We came out of a place that, at the end of World War II, had an income barely over half the national average. But we were fortunate enough to live through a time when opportunity was expanding and when we were trying to come to grips with our racial and other problems in this country.

And what I wish to say to you is that you are going into the time of greatest human possibility in all history, but you must address the fact that all of our forces of opportunity have seeds of destruction. You must make sense and clarity out of complex problems. And I think you must do it with a much greater sense of optimism and hope than we are seeing in most debate today. There is nothing wrong with this country that cannot be solved by what is right with it, and you should never forget that.

We have a lot of things to do here in America. We have to grow our middle class again and shrink our under class and give our children

something to say yes to. We have to strengthen our families and our communities and make the idea of work more real to people for whom it has become unattainable. We have to preserve our environment and enhance our security at home and abroad. And I would argue that we must maintain the leadership of the United States in the world as a force for peace and freedom.

To all those who want to withdraw, who want to turn away, who want to abolish our foreign assistance programs, let me remind you: Look at the history of the 21st century. Every time America turned away from the world, we wound up with a war that we had to clean up and win at far greater costs than if we simply stayed involved in a responsible manner.

But our most important mission today, I would argue, is to help people make the most of their own lives. You can come down in many places on all these debates in Washington and around the country, but it is self-evident that unless people in this country, wherever they come from, whatever their race or economic standing or region, can make the most of their own lives, whatever is in there—the magic inside all of us—we will not fulfill our common destiny.

And today, more than ever before, it really does all begin with education, what we know and what we can learn. The class of 1945 saw the greatest explosion of economic opportunity in all human history after World War II, in no small measure because every one who participated was given the opportunity to get a higher education through the GI bill. And I am absolutely convinced that that was one of the two or three reasons that the United States of America developed the finest, largest, broadest, deepest system of higher learning in the entire world. And it is still the best system in the entire world because of what happened then.

When President Eisenhower faced the dilemma of the Soviets beating the United States into space and the fact that we had let a lot of our educational opportunities go downhill, he launched a great education initiative, giving loans to people all across the country and giving them good opportunities to pay them back. And they called it then the National Defense Education Act. The idea was that even in the late fifties, education was a part of our national security.

I tell you that that is more important today than it was in 1945 and more important today than it was in the late fifties. Men my age, between 45 and 55, grew up believing that when we reached this age, we'd have the security of knowing we could send our children to college, we'd have a decent retirement, we'd be living in our own homes, if illness came we'd be able to take care of it. We took these things for granted if we worked hard, obeyed the law, and paid our taxes. In the last 10 years, earnings of men between the ages of 45 and 55 have gone down 14 percent because in the global economy, if you live in a wealthy country and you don't have an education, you are in trouble. We cannot walk away from our obligation to invest in the education of every American at every age.

And to those who think there is no public role in that, I say: Just remember all of those who need those student loans, who need those Pell grants, all the universities who benefit from the research investments. There is a role for our Nation in the national education agenda of our future, and we should maintain it.

But let me make one other point as well. Education is about more than making money and mastering technology, even in the 21st century. It's about making connections and mastering the complexities of the world. It's about seeing the world as it is and advancing the cause of human dignity. Money without purpose leads to an empty life. Technology without compassion and wisdom and a devotion to truth can lead to nightmares. The sarin gas in the Japanese subway was a miracle of technology. The bomb that blew up the Federal building in Oklahoma City was a miracle of technology. We have got to use our knowledge to become wiser about the things which we do not understand and to find ways to use our knowledge to bring us together in ways that reinforce our common humanity.

I want to thank Governor Merrill for his support here in New Hampshire for our national service program, AmeriCorps, because I think it exemplifies that kind of objective. And I want to thank Dartmouth for participating in it.

The idea behind national service is to make a connection between ideas and the real world of need out there beyond the ivory towers of academia, to make a connection between earning an education and advancing the quality of life for others who may not have it, a connection

to be wanting to be respected for who you are and what you believe and not demeaning or demonizing those who are different.

I want to say a special word of thanks to the medical school for the partnership in health education project of the Koop Institute, which sends medical students into elementary schools up here in New Hampshire and in Vermont to help to promote health and prevent disease among young people. That also is a purpose of education, building connections, giving to others, helping to bind us together.

A society is not a collection of people pursuing their individual economic, material self-interests. It is a collection of people who believe that by working together they can raise better children, have stronger families, have more meaningful lives, and have something to pass on to the generation that comes behind. That also is the purpose of education, and we need it more than ever today.

And so, my fellow Americans, and those of you who will live and work here, you must decide: What is this new world going to be like? You can probably do fine, regardless. You have a world-class education at a wonderful institution. You have the luxury of deciding. Will you devote your lives and your compassion and your conviction to saying that everybody ought to have the opportunity that you had? Will you believe that there is a common good and it's worth investing a little of what you earned as a result of your education in? Will you believe that education is about more than economics, that it's also about civilization and character? You must decide. Will you work for more equality and more opportunity? Will the information superhighway be traveled by all, even poor kids in distant rural areas? Will they be connected to the rest of the world, or will the information superhighway simply give access on the Internet to paranoids who tell you how to make bombs? Will education lead you to lives of service and genuine citizenship or a politics of hollow, reactionary rhetoric where, in the name of reducing Government, we abandon the public interests to the private forces of short-term gain?

Just a few days ago, at Harvard, President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic said that our conscience must catch up with our reason or all is lost. I say to you today, we are having a great debate in the Nation's Capital, and we ought to have it. It can be a good and healthy

thing. But some things must be beyond debate. We are all in this together.

A country at a crossroads has a chance always to redeem its promise. America is the longest lasting democracy in human history because at every crossroads we have redeemed that promise. And you must do it again today.

We've got a real chance to make a real life together, folks. Yes, there's more ethnic and racial diversity in this country than in any other large country. Yes, there's more income differential, and that's getting worse, and it's troubling. But this is still, for my money, the country that's the best bet to keep alive hope and decency and opportunity for all different kinds of people well into the next century.

I've had the privilege of representing you all over the world, and I think all the time, every day, about what it's going to be like in 20 or 30 or 40 or 50 years, when you come back here for that remarkable reunion that they're celebrating today. And I am telling you, if you will simply use what you have been given in your lives, from God and the people who have helped you along the way, to rebuild this country and to bring it back together and not to let us be divided by all these forces, to lift up these forces of opportunity and to stamp out the seeds of destruction, you still are at the moment of greatest possibility in all human history.

Your late president, John Kemeny, who came to this country after fleeing Hungary, told the last commencement he presided over in 1981, the following: "The most dangerous voice you'll ever hear is the evil voice of prejudice that divides black from white, man from woman, Jew from Gentile. Listen to the voice that says man can live in harmony. Use your very considerable talents to make the world better." Then he ended the speech with, as I understand, the words with which he ended every commencement: "Women and men of Dartmouth, all mankind is your brother. And you are your brother's keeper. Do not let people divide you one from another."

Do not let people make you cynical. And do not think for a minute that you can have a good, full life if you don't care about what happens to the other people who share this Nation and this planet with you.

Good luck, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. on Memorial Field. In his remarks, he referred to James Freedman, president, and James Wright, acting president, Dartmouth College; Gov. Stephen Merrill of New Hampshire; and honorees William H. Gray III, Special Adviser on Haiti, and Nannerl Overholser Keohane, president, Duke University.

Remarks in a Town Meeting With Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich in Claremont, New Hampshire

June 11, 1995

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much, Lou. Mr. Speaker, Governor, Mayor Lizott, Congressman Bass, Mrs. Gingrich, Mrs. Zelif, to Sandy Osgood, and to the Stevens High School Band, thank you very much for keeping everybody entertained while I got away from Dartmouth and got over here.

I am delighted to be back in Claremont again. I have spent some happy days here. And I was invited to come here, as you know, when you folks found out—I think it was actually Lou's idea; he found out I was going to be at Dartmouth giving the speech. And then I was inter-

viewed, and someone said, "Well, the Speaker is going to be here for the whole weekend. What advice would you give him?" And I said, "Well, I'd give him two pieces of advice. I think he ought to—if he's going to be in Concord, he ought to go down to Mary Hill's grocery store and talk to her because she's a wise woman. And he ought to do one of these little town meetings like I do from time to time." And so he called me, and he said, "I accept." [Laughter]

So that's how you became transformed into this. I'm going to talk for a couple of minutes; he's going to talk for a couple of minutes. Then